Ex-CIA Backed Troops Seize Laotian Town

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VIENTIANE, Laos, Dec. 24 —Disgruntled former guerrilla troops of the CIA-sponsored "clandestine army" seized the provincial capital of Ban Houei Sai in northern Laos before dawn today, government sources reported.

Several persons were reported wounded in the fighting.

The local representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development, John Huxtable, was reported confined to his house by the rebels but was unharmed.

"The rebel troops definitely are holding the town, but so far we have only fragmentary reports of what is going on," one source said. "The rebels have the airport and no planes are flying in to Ban Houei Sai at the moment."

The rebels are Lao Theung tribesmen who had been members of the separate army supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency that did much of the fighting against the pro-Communist Pathet Lao.

The same two companies seized Ban Houei Sai in October after the CIA-supported army was disbanded and many of the men's names were not transferred to the rolls of the Royal Lao Army. The army said the omission was due to a "bookkeeping error."

Today the rebels were said to be supporting a seven-point program being pushed by students activists which includes a call for dissolution of the National Assembly.